

Beware of False Prophets

Matthew 7:15-27—¹⁵ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. ¹⁶ Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? ¹⁷ Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. ²⁰ Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. ²¹ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. ²⁴ Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: ²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. ²⁶ And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: ²⁷ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

I. Verse 7—"Ask...Seek...Knock"

- A. In **Matthew 7:7**, the Lord Jesus had tapped into what every person on earth is doing.
- B. Every person on earth is already now asking and seeking and knocking.
- C. The problem is that most people are looking at the world when they are asking and seeking and knocking.
 1. Most people are asking the world to satisfy their heart's deep longings.
 2. Most people are seeking from the world the pleasures and delights the soul longs for.
 3. Most people are knocking on the world's door for the next thrilling opportunity of life.
 4. Most people are looking to the world when they ask, seek, and knock.
 5. Most people (not just lost people) are facing the world as they ask, seek, and knock for the needs of their souls.
- D. This is what the Lord meant when He explained to the woman at the well who had five husbands and was living with a man who was not her husband. Her problem was in **John 4:13**.
 1. **John 4:13** says, "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again."
- E. The Lord was speaking to a woman who for all her life looked to the world for love and self-affirmation just to know that she had some worth and importance.
- F. The Lord was speaking to a woman who was doing whatever it took, including giving her body to whatever man would show her the least amount of attention and interest. She was looking to the world of men to show her attention and interest.
- G. When the Lord used the word "drinketh" in **John 4:13**, Jesus said, "Whosoever **drinketh** of this water."
 1. The Lord was saying to this woman, "Yes, Ma'am! You are asking and seeking and knocking to satisfy the needs of your soul. There is no lack of asking and seeking and knocking on your part. You don't stop asking and seeking and knocking as you tolerate one man after another into your bed."
 2. "I have some news for you, and it is **John 4:13**. As long as you keep facing the world, the world of men, you are going to keep up coming up empty."
 - a. **John 4:13** says, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again."
 3. You could just picture the Lord speaking to that woman and pointing to the world of men as He said, "Whosoever drinketh of this water (pointing to the world of men) shall thirst again."
- D. To emphasize His point to her, the Lord said to her in **John 4:16-18**, "¹⁶ Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. ¹⁷ The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: ¹⁸ For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly."
- E. The Lord was saying to that woman, "Five husbands and men who were not even your husband **have all left you thirsting again** for love and care and self affirmation. Isn't it all enough for you yet? Haven't you had your fill of disappointment in life? Aren't you ready yet for a new way of life? How many times are you willing to be knocked down on the floor and trampled on?"
- F. The Lord is saying that He is using the water in that well as a symbol of the world to that woman. The Lord is saying, "If you keep asking and seeking and knocking on the door of the world of men for that love and care and self esteem you crave, you will keep getting knocked down and be thirsty again." He kindly tells her no man in the world can give you what you need.
 1. **John 4:13-14** says, "¹³ Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: ¹⁴ But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."
- B. He promises, if you take the water that I will give you, there will come a person to live inside of you. That person will be me the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit will be that well of water springing up into **everlasting life**.
 2. The Holy Spirit will be that well of water springing up with **endless love and care**.
 3. The Holy Spirit will be a well of water springing up with **the endless comfort that is meant for only you**.
 4. The Holy Spirit will be the well of water springing up with **that someone who you can mean something to**.
 5. The Holy Spirit will be the well of water springing up with the assurance of that love of **John 3:16**.
 - a. **John 3:16** says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
- G. If you drink that water that Jesus offers us, you will have a new song.

*I've found a friend who is all to me;
His love is ever true.
I love to tell how He lifted me,
And what His grace can do for you.*

- H. You will sing a new song of:

*I've found a Friend, oh, such a Friend!
He loved me ere I knew Him;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him.
And round my heart still closely twine
Those ties which naught can sever,
For I am His, and He is mine,
Forever and forever.*

- I. You will sing a new song of:

*All my life long I had panted
For a draught from some cool spring,
That I hoped would quench the burning
Of the thirst I felt within. Hallelujah! I have found Him
Whom my soul so long has craved!
Jesus satisfies my longings;
Through His life I now am saved.*

- J. There are two problems that people fall into when they read that account of the woman at the well in John 4. The first problem is that they look at that woman, and they say “Five husbands and who knows how many other men in her bed? What an immoral woman! So dirty! That is not me! Therefore, what the Lord Jesus said to that woman has no application to me. That is for all the sexually immoral people, and I am not a sleep around so that does not apply to me!”
1. That is a misapplication of this history. We are all the same as that woman at the well because whether sexual sin or other sin, we have all “*come short of the glory of God*” (**Romans 3:23**).
 - a. **Ecclesiastes 7:20**—“*For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*”
 - b. **1 John 1:8**—“*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*”
- K. The truth is that every one of us has and does sin.
1. There is no such thing as a good sin.
 2. There is no such thing as a white lie.
 3. There is no such thing as a clean sin.
 4. All sin is dirty; all sin is rotten.
 5. We are all dirty, rotten sinners.
- L. Yes! That woman at the well was a dirty, rotten sinner, and if we are honest, we step over the line and take our place with her as just another dirty, rotten sinner.
- M. To push this woman away from us and like the Pharisee say in **Luke 18**.
1. **Luke 18:11-12** says, “¹¹*The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. ¹²I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*”
- N. We are wrong to go look at this immoral woman in John 4 and go over to the side of the Pharisee.

- O. We are right to leave the side of the Pharisee and go over to the side of this woman at the well and say with the publican in **Luke 18:13**.
1. The verse says, *“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”*
- P. We are right to go over on the side of this woman at the well and say, “God be merciful to me a sinner just as bad as that woman at the well.”
1. Or, you can read it as Paul put it in **1 Timothy 1:15**.
 - a. **1 Timothy 1:15** states, *“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”*
- Q. There is a second misapplication of the history of the woman at the well in John 4. It is to not see how what she did applies to us. It was what was motivating her to sleep around.
1. The point of the history of the woman at the well is missed when it is not recognized what the woman at the well was doing. She was looking to the world. In her case, the world of men for true, inner soul satisfaction.
 2. She was looking at the world and asking, seeking, and knocking to find love and contentment.
- R. The point of the history of the woman at the well is missed when a believer says, “Oh Yes! She was a lost person. She was not saved. She was not a believer. When the Lord spoke to her He was getting a lost person saved. But, me! I am not lost. I am saved. I am a believer. I don’t need to be saved. I don’t need to come to the Lord. I already did that so the history of the woman at the well does not apply directly to me. I already have that well of water in me springing up into everlasting life. Only in my days before I was saved can I identify with the woman at the well. But, not now! I don’t now identify with the woman at the well.”
- S. The point of the woman at the well is seen in the words, *“Drinketh of this water.”*
1. **John 4:13** says, *“Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever **drinketh of this water** shall thirst again.”*
 2. The lost are not the only ones who *“drinketh of this water shall thirst again.”* *“Drinketh of this water shall thirst again”* also applies to the saved.
- T. What is the **“this water”** the Lord was referring to in **John 4:13**? It is looking to something in this world and asking, seeking, and knocking at the world for soul satisfaction.
- U. The water that the Lord was referring to might be a relationship that someone is asking and seeking and knocking on to bring happiness from. It could be a relationship outside of marriage or even in a marriage.
1. Human relationships are the very common stuff of the “this water” that disappoints. People put their whole heart into asking and seeking and knocking.
 2. The Lord hears those words about a boy that “He is my destiny” and “He will always be my true love now until forever.” The Lord shakes His head back and forth and says that this is the “water.”
- V. The “water” that causes a person to thirst again can be often achievements and attainments in life of which the Lord said that there was no profit.
1. **Mark 8:36** states, *“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”*
- W. The reason the water of gain makes a person thirst again is because “the more is never enough.”
- X. The issue here is asking and seeking and knocking on the door of the world of relationships or possessions or pleasures for soul satisfaction.
- Y. There has to be a turning to the Lord Jesus with the asking and seeking and knocking for satisfaction. There must be a turning away from the asking and seeking and knocking at the world. That is called repentance.
1. Because just as it is written in **Matthew 6:24**, *“no man can serve two masters,”* no man can ask and seek and knock on both God’s door and the world’s door.
- Z. If a person stops asking and seeking and knocking in life, then he has just given up and doesn’t want to live anymore. Everyone is asking and seeking and knocking
1. The issue is who they are asking and seeking and knocking God or the world.
- II. Verse 15—*“Beware of false prophets”*
- A. Now, the Lord sees a lost person as saved, and now He gives a warning to the saved in verse 15. He says, *“Beware of false prophets.”*
1. A prophet not only foretells the future, but also teaches.
- B. The Lord is saying, “Beware of false teachers.” “Beware” is a strong word that means to be cautious.
1. I remember when I had just come to the Lord Jesus as a new believer at UCSD, and I met some fellow students on campus who told me that they were believers also.
 2. At that time in 1971, there were very few believers on campus. There were not enough believers to have a Campus Crusade Fellowship group. All the believers could do is to form one group called Trident Christian Fellowship. It is different today, but back then, we were few in number.
 3. To meet fellow believers on campus was rare, but there was something different about these two guys. I remember that one sat on one side of me and the other on the other side. They started to come on strong with questions like, “Have you received the gift of the Holy Spirit? Have you spoken in tongues yet?”

4. I had no idea what they were talking about. The only gift I knew about was the gift of sins forgiven and cleansing. Yet, they talked about how I needed to rise to the next level. I had no knowledge at all. I didn't really know the Bible. One thing I did know was these guys were aggressive and putting pressure on me to do something. That made my guard go up. That made me suspicious.
- C. When He used the word, "Beware," He is saying, "Be careful. Don't let your guard down." When you have found "falsehood," avoid them.

III. **Matthew 24:4**—*"Take heed that no man deceive you"*

- A. As the buildings shined with gold on a beautiful day, the disciples were mesmerized by the golden buildings of the temple, and they wanted to show the Lord those beautiful temple buildings.
- B. That is how that day all started—with an admiration of the temple buildings when the Lord shocked them with His comments.
 1. **Matthew 24:1-2** says, *"¹And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. ²And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."*
- C. The disciples were stunned. Here one minute the disciples were basking in the beauty of the temple buildings and talk with the Lord about how beautiful they were.
 1. The Lord states that every one of the stones of those temple buildings was going to be thrown down.
- D. They were standing on the Mount of Olives looking at the temple buildings of Jerusalem and in between them is the Kidron Valley. The Lord is telling them that the stones of the temple are going to be thrown in the valley between them and Jerusalem. That did it! They thought, "Boy, the Lord really knows how to ruin a beautiful time!"
- E. So, all of a sudden the whole atmosphere changes from, "Oh what a beautiful morning" to "Oh what a terrible time is coming." The disciples have one question, and that is, "When?"
- F. There are a lot of people around the Lord when He said that, and the disciples did not want for everyone to hear the Lord's description of the end of the world. They got the Lord alone and asked him privately in **Matthew 24:3**.
 1. The verse says, *"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"*
 2. They understood that he was talking about the end when the Lord was going to return, and there would be the end of the world.
 3. They were expecting for the Lord to tell them about what would happen to some country, or some great national war, or some great natural disaster like a massive earthquake.
- G. Instead, the Lord spoke about what would happen to them when He replied in verse 4
 1. **Matthew 24:4** states, *"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you."*
- D. His reply to their question about what would be the indication of His return to earth and the end of the world was personal deception.
 1. We can picture the disciples backing away from the Lord after their private question about the end times and wondering, "That really does not sound like an answer to our question. We ask what the sign of the end times is going to be and He tells us to be careful that we are not deceived?"
 2. "Did He really hear us?"
 3. "Maybe, He did not hear our question?"
- E. The Lord did hear their question, and that was the answer to their question.
- F. In the last days, there will be such strong winds of deception that will threaten the strongest disciples.
 1. **Mark 13:22** says, *"For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect."*

IV. Verse 15—*"Beware"*

- A. So, when the Lord said in verse 15, *"Beware of false prophets,"* our question is, "How?"
 1. How are we to identify false teachers?
 2. How are we to identify false teaching?
 3. What are the indicators of false teaching that we need to be on the look-out for?
 4. What are the signs of deception?

V. **Mark 13:22**—*"Show signs and wonders"*

- A. The Lord gave one indication in **Mark 13:22** which says, *"False prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect."*
- B. One indication of deception is the use of miracles to validate a teacher or teaching.
- C. You see these miracles commonly used to validate false teaching in the area of miraculous healing.
- D. Katherine Kuhlman was one of these deceivers who used healing miracles at the Shriners Auditorium where she taped her weekly TV program called, "I believe in miracles." Katherine Kuhlman would prance across the stage in her flowing white dresses and call for miracles of healings

1. A Jewish friend of our family used to work for her in lining up phony healings to trick people.
 - E. That is not to say that Katherine Kuhlman used all phony miracles. The Lord spoke about deceivers using real, genuine miracles to deceive.
 - F. Katherine Kuhlman deceived many people as she was endorsed by Chuck Smith and Benny Hinn.
 - G. So, the first indication of a deceiver is the use of signs and miracles to validate them as a teacher—particularly healings.
- VI. Verse 15—*“Come to you in sheep’s clothing”*
- A. The Lord then gave another indication of a deceiver when He said in verse 15.
 1. **Matthew 7:15** says, *“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing.”*
 - B. The Lord called out the clothing of the false teachers.
 - C. Katherine Kuhlman was notorious for appearing in outlandish clothing that she used to bring attention to herself with her Abra Kadabra swinging of her hands to call down healing miracles.
 - D. No matter what color dress she wore—whether it was a white dress or a floral pattern dress or a pink dress or whether it was a full sleeved dress or a short sleeved dress—many of her dresses had the same look.
 - E. When she would wave her hands or swing her hand to point, that extra material on her sleeve acted like a flag to call attention to her as she would prance across the stage with a lot of drama.
 - F. The Lord spoke of the use of clothing by deceivers in **Luke 20:46**.
 1. The verse states, *“Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts.”*
 - G. The Lord called attention to the scribes in how they loved to walk in long robes.
 1. We can just picture the scribes walking in the long robes in the markets as they strutted through the markets with their long robes flowing around and behind them like flags calling attention to themselves.
 2. This is what Katherine Kuhlman did with that long material at the end of her sleeves.
 3. That long material called attention to her hands as she would use her long, bony fingers to point. With her hair back on her head, she was very effective to flash her eyes of fire.
 4. She drew tens of thousands to her meetings, and she had a following of millions.
- VII. 2 Corinthians 11:14—*“Transformed into...angel of light”*
- A. One characteristic of deception is the use of truth and light.
 - B. Deceivers use the truth and preach the truth, but, this is just the bait to couch their lie in.
 - C. Deceivers throw enough strait balls that you don’t see the curve ball when they throw it.
 1. The devil did not come to Eve and say, “I am the devil, and I have come to lead you away from God, so I can destroy you.”
 2. Instead, he said in **Genesis 3:1**, *“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”*
 - D. The truth was that God did say to not eat of one tree in the garden, and that was true.
 - E. But, the lie was that God did not say that they were not to eat of every tree in the garden.
 - F. This is what the devil does. He transforms himself into a revealer of light.
 1. **2 Corinthians 11:13-14** says, *“¹³For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. ¹⁴And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”*
 - G. The deceiver looks like a good person—a reasonable person.
 1. This can be seen in **Revelation 13:11**.
 - a. The verse says, *“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.”*
 - b. Here was a Satanic beast, but it had two little horns like a gentle lamb.
 2. **Revelation 9:7-8** also says, *“⁷And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. ⁸And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.”*
 - a. Here were awful locusts of death like horses with teeth like lions.
 - b. Yet, they had faces like men, and their hair was like the hair of women. They had kind faces and gentle hair of women, but they were deadly.
 - H. “Angel of light” is a characteristic of false teachers; there is always the “new revelation” of some truth that you never saw before.
 - I. False teachers see themselves as having a new vision.
 1. This is a special vision that no one else sees, and they see themselves with a calling to enlighten others to follow this new vision they have.
 - J. False teachers emphasize the need for a different practice in the church.
 1. Deceptions start with pointing out something normally done in the church that they identify as wrong and has to be changed. What they do differently becomes their defining characteristic.
 - a. “We are different, because we do not gather on Sunday.”
 - b. “We are different because we do not call the Lord ‘Jesus.’ We use another name for the Lord.”

- K. False teachers see themselves as a movement.
 - 1. Deceptive teachings see themselves as a “Revolutionary Movement” or a “Modern Day Movement.”
- L. False teachers emphasize the need for their followers to be in subjection to their leadership.
 - 1. False teachers typically discourage their followers from free thinking on their own and keep a close watch on what their followers believe and teach.
- M. False teachers emphasize that their group is the place where their followers feel they “belong.”
 - 1. Their teaching is critical of others to the point where they try to make their followers feel like they do not belong in other groups.
 - 2. Their teaching leads people to feel like when they are in their groups that they have found their home where they belong.
 - 3. This new sense of belonging causes the followers of these false teachers to no longer feel at home with others and even family members who do not believe this new false teaching.
- N. False teachers lead their followers to have a new way of interpreting the Bible.
 - 1. Followers of false teachers begin to see the false teaching all throughout the Bible which they never saw before.
- O. These are some of the characteristics of false teachers that the Lord said in **Matthew 7:14**.